(a) whether it is fact that there is a huge difference between consumer purchase price and producer's selling price of essential daily use consumer commodities in the country;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto and the average minimum and maximum difference in the first quarter of the years 2008-09 and 2009-10; and

(c) whether this difference has caused high inflation and if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (c) The difference between producer's price and consumer's price of essential commodities vary from commodity to commodity and location. Wholesale and retail prices are collected on a weekly/daily basis. Any large differences between the wholesale and retail prices are brought to the Notice of the respective State Governments. The wholesale and retail prices are mainly determined by market forces of supply and demand. Difference in wholesale price and retail price of essential commodities is mainly due to (i) transportation and handling costs (ii) packaging and other marketing expenses at retail, (iii) retailers mark-up and (iv) various taxes levied by different State Governments e.g. octroi duty.

———————

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Empowerment of women in animal husbandry and dairy sector

†3656. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has formulated any scheme for empowerment of women in animal husbandry and dairy sector;

(b) whether women have any contribution in the field of fish, milk and food and they also remain forerunner in dairy cooperative; and

(c) if so, the level at which Government is helping them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Women are actively involved in allied fisheries activities like seed collection, fishing and juvenile fishes, collection of mussels, sea weeds, fish marketing, fish processing and product development etc.

Under the Central Sponsored Scheme on Development of Marine Fisheries, Infrastructure and Post Harvest Operations, Central financial assistance to the tune 75% of the product cost is provided to fisherwomen/fishermen cooperatives, self help groups of women for creation of post harvest infrastructure facilities with a view to empowering the women.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

About 71% of women are involved in various activities in dairy sector. They have been at the forefront of Dairy Cooperative Movement which was initially carried under the "Operation Flood" Programme and later under the "Integrated Dairy Development Programme" implemented by the Central Government.

(c) Ministry of Women and Child Development is administering a Central Sector Scheme called 'Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP) scheme which provides skill upgradation training in animal husbandry and dairying sectors by mobilizing women in *via*ble cooperative/SHGs, arranging for marketing linkages, support services and access to credit etc. Financial assistance is provided to women beneficiaries through various implementing agencies.

The Indian Council of Agriculture Research has established a Directorate of Women in Agriculture with the major objective of empowering of women in agriculture with advance knowledge and skills in farm operations. Such empowerment schemes carried out through training and demonstration also covers the animal husbandry sub sector. In addition to this all the Kissan Vikas Kendras in the country carried out women centric training in Animal Husbandry Sector.

Implementation of National Agriculture Insurance Scheme

3657. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether National Agriculture Insurance Scheme (NAIS) is under implementation;

(b) if so, the details thereof along with crops included and norms for payment under the said scheme;

(c) whether Government proposes to amend the NAIS;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the extent to which the farmers are likely to be benefited under modified NAIS along with the likely additional financial liability on Government as a result thereof during the current financial year; and

(f) how much amount has been paid towards this scheme to farmers in last three years against their crops losses?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The National Agricultural Insurance scheme (NAIS) is under implementation in the country from Rabi 1999-2000 season onward. The scheme is voluntary for the States and UTs and is available to all the farmers—loanee and non-loanee both — irrespective of their size of holdings. It envisages coverage of food crops, oilseeds, pulsus and annual commercial/horticultural crops for which yield data is available for adequate number of years.

---

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.